

C H A P. XI.

Of the morality of human actions^a.

I. **L**AW being the rule of human actions, if we compare these actions with the law, we observe that they are either conformable or opposite to it; and this sort of qualification of our actions in respect to the law, is called *morality*.

In what the morality of actions consists.

The term of *morality* comes from *mores* or manners. Manners, as we have already observed, are the free actions of man, considered as susceptible of direction and rule. Thus we call morality the relation of human actions to the law, by which they are directed; and we give the name of moral philosophy to the collection of those rules by which we are to square our actions.

II. The morality of actions may be considered in two different lights: 1. in regard to the manner in which the law disposes of them; and 2. in relation to the conformity or opposition of these same actions to the law.

Actions are 1. either commanded, or forbidden, or permitted.

In the first consideration, human actions are either commanded, or forbidden, or permitted.

As we are indispensably obliged to do what is commanded, and to abstain from what is forbidden by a lawful superior, civilians consider commanded actions as necessary; and forbidden actions as impos-

^a See the law of nature and nations, book 1. chap. 7. and the duties of man and a citizen, book 1. chap 2. §. 11, &c.